

Medicare Coverage of Diabetic Footwear



Senior Health Insurance
Information Program

Ask SHIIP

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Q: My doctor suggested I get special shoes to prevent foot problems caused by diabetes. Will Medicare pay for these?

A: Therapeutic footwear and proper foot care can prevent or reduce foot complications due to diabetes. You should work closely with your physician and other health care professionals to prevent and minimize the possible effects of diabetes on your feet. According to a recent survey, about 86,000 lower limbs are amputated annually in the United States due to complications from diabetes.

Medicare Part B covers therapeutic shoes for diabetics. To qualify for Medicare coverage, your physician who manages your diabetes must certify that you:

1. Have diabetes
2. Have one or more of the following conditions in one or both feet:

- History of partial or complete foot amputation
- History of foot ulcers
- History of calluses that could lead to ulcers
- Peripheral neuropathy with signs that you have problems with calluses
- Poor circulation
- Foot deformity

3. Are being treated under a comprehensive diabetes care plan and need therapeutic shoes and/or inserts because of diabetes

Source: www.medicare.gov

In addition to receiving this certification from your physician, you will need a prescription for the footwear.

Diabetic therapeutic footwear is considered Durable Medical Equipment and is covered by Medicare at 80% of the approved amount. You, or your supplemental insurance, are responsible for the remaining 20% and any excess amount charged by your provider.

Specifically, Medicare will usually approve one pair of depth shoes and six inserts per year **or** one pair of custom molded shoes (including inserts) and two additional pairs of inserts. If you have

special conditions or other problems Medicare may pay for modifications such as rocker bottoms, wedges, roller bottoms, or metatarsal bars. Medicare does not pay for deluxe features such as certain color styles or special leathers.

For questions about Medicare coverage call:

AdminaStar Federal
800-270-2313

Diabetes is also the leading cause of new cases of blindness among adults ages 20 to 74. Medicare now covers annual glaucoma screenings (dilated eye examination) for diabetics and those with a family history of glaucoma.

Approximately 16 million people in the United States have diabetes; 5.4 million of which do not realize it. Please contact your family physician or the **American Diabetes Association** (888-diabetes www.diabetes.org) to learn more about the signs and symptoms of diabetes.

Address your questions to:

Ask SHIIP
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Ste. 300
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1-800-452-4800
Or higgins@qtm.net

SHIIP is a free, unbiased counseling program provided by the Indiana State Department of Insurance. For assistance, call your local SHIIP site to make an appointment or call the state office at 1-800-452-4800 to obtain a list of local SHIIP sites.